

# *The American* MUSIC LOVER

*The Record Connoisseur's Magazine*



Debussy



August, 1944 • VOL. X, No. 12

**Edited by PETER HUGH REED**

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Several overseas readers, in service, have written us recently that they have not received any copies for a period of months. This was the result of several changes in address of which the reader at no time had notified us. Had the copies been returned to us, we might have forwarded them again, but these copies were never returned for one reason or another. If our readers in service fail to receive, say, the

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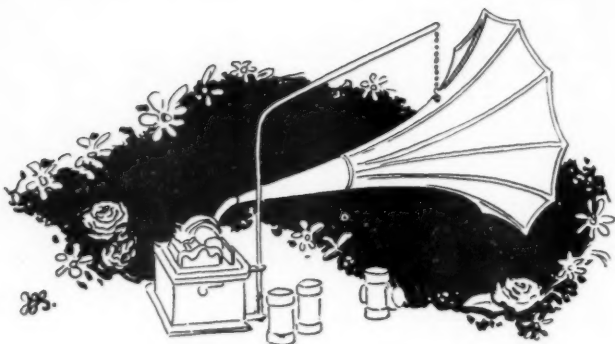
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## PREDICTIONS - 1893

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By Philip G. Hubert, Jr.

*We are indebted to Mr. Angus Joss of Joliet, Illinois, for calling our attention to the following article, which originally appeared in the pages of the Century Magazine for May 1893, under the title "What the Phonograph Will Do For Music and Music Lovers." Mr. Joss is the only remaining manufacturer of the cylinder phonograph record today, the record—or "phonogram," as Mr. Hubert perhaps more aptly terms it—which fits and plays on the machines of fifty-one years ago.—Ed.*

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Looking at the phonograph from the point of view of a person professionally interested in music, I cannot see room for doubting the tremendous role which this extraordinary invention is to play in the future of music and musicians. Few people seem to realize that the phonograph, even in the present stage—which is admitted to be of imperfection as compared with what may be expected before many years have passed—has really title to be called a musical instrument. My own skill with the phonograph is certainly not that of an expert, and yet I get no little enjoyment from the dance-music and the operatic fantasias which it reels off in the evening

for the amusement of the family, while people less pampered than I am in the matter of music are filled with enthusiasm over its performances. It is really music, and not a mere suggestion of music. The different instruments employed are perfectly distinct, while the time is of course perfect. Taking, for instance, a chord of the piano, not only are the notes of the chord heard, but the after-vibrations, lasting for several seconds. When a small funnel is used to magnify the sound, every person in a large room can hear distinctly, and the music is almost loud enough to be used for dancing. In one of the phonograms, as the wax cylinders are called, the rounds of applause, the hand clapping, the pounding of canes upon the floor, which followed the spirited performance of a popular melody at Mr. Edison's Orange laboratory, have been allowed to appear, making most people start with amazement as, after the last chords have died away, comes these sharp cries of "Bravo!" and the confused rattle of applause from the audience.

Such being the case—and every musician familiar with the musical doings of the phonograph will admit that the foregoing is a moderate statement—, what

may the phonograph, as a music-maker and teacher, not do for the world? Bear in mind that the phonograms do not deteriorate by constant use, the same music coming out the hundredth time as perfectly as the first; also that, by the duplication through a special electroplating process, facsimiles of a good phonogram can be made in large numbers at almost nominal cost. If each phonogram turned out required the actual performance of music for its productions, the output would be restricted and costly; it would be like setting anew the type for every copy of a book. Again, if the phonogram could be used only a few times, as was the case with the zinc-foil sheets used in the crude form of the instrument, the apparatus would remain a toy for the rich. Conceding its power of musical reproduction by means of wax cylinders, which are both cheap and lasting, the imagination may run riot without exhausting the field opened before one. Besides giving musical pleasure past present computation to the millions, it will do wonders for the musician. First, it will offer the composer a means of indicating his wishes concerning time and expression compared with which the metronome and all printed directions and expression-marks of the present are but the clumsiest of makeshifts. Secondly, it will become a great teacher of music, as even the phonographic echo of the piano, of singing or of orchestral work, will be sufficient to furnish pupils with precise models. In the third place, it offers a means for solving tone problems too delicate for the powers of the human ear, and heretofore beyond solution.

#### A Recording By Hans von Buelow

At Herr von Buelow's farewell concert in this country, two years ago, a phonograph was employed to make a record of the whole concert, and particular care was taken with Beethoven's symphony, the *Eroica*. The learned conductor left the country before the phonograms, the results of the evening's work, could be prepared for his hearing, but the results surprised and delighted a host of musical experts—musicians of repute have confessed to me that, whereas they had looked upon the stories concerning the phonograph's musi-

cal achievements with incredulity, what they heard far surpassed the promises made by the advocates of the invention, and showed possibilities for the device as a help to the musician of the future which would set every musician a-dreaming. It may be granted without discussion that the phonographic record of our music will give for all future time the exact wishes of our composers and performers with regard to tempi, shades of expression, phrasing, dynamic gradations, and all the niceties of interpretation which no written marks, however minute, can begin to convey. The metronome until now has been the only means of marking the time or pace at which a composition is intended to be played by the composer. As contrasted with the phonographic guide to correct time, it is crude enough. The worst phonograph will at least give a faithful record of the exact time of a piece, and for every bar—in fact, the exact length of every note in the score. The experiments made with the records of piano playing show that, so far as accuracy is concerned, no limit can be placed upon the possibilities as an echo. Every minute change of time, every shade of expression, is heard in the echo as plainly as in the original. It is no exaggeration to say that an expert can distinguish between the playing of two pianists as reproduced in the phonograph.

#### Lost Performances

There are certain things about piano-playing—indeed, about all musical performances—that cannot be taught. Pianists, violinists and singers are apt to surpass themselves under certain conditions, due perhaps to the applause of a great audience, perhaps to peculiar personal conditions favorable to artistic expression. Efforts are produced which escape analysis, and cannot be reproduced at will for the benefit of pupils. The artist may not ever be able to do again what has been done once, and the exact elements or constituents of an effect are lost. The niceties of phrasing cannot be indicated by written marks; they must be left to the musical instinct or intelligence of the singer or player: yet expressive phrasing constitutes an important element of all fine musical

work. The half-dozen notes of a bar may each one have a different length and different power, and yet be all alike on paper. If we can obtain at trifling cost a perfect echo of any musical performance, it is highly probable then, when the phonograph is found in every house, a phonographing version will accompany the printed sheet. The latter will give the actual notes, while the phonograms will give the reading of some great player. Or, perhaps, inasmuch as the phonograms can be reproduced for almost nothing, the readings of half a dozen artists will follow the printed page. For instance, the music shops will sell with Beethoven's pianoforte concertos the phonographic readings of the same by Rubinstein, Buelow, and Saint-Saëns. The whole need not cost more than a few cents as far as the phonogram are concerned.

#### The Phonograph As An Incentive

Some persons have expressed a fear lest the wide distribution of an apparatus capable of echoing all sorts of music, in a more perfect fashion than any music-box, might lead to the gradual extinction of piano or violin playing except for purposes of public exhibition, the phonograph echo of some great performer's work being so much superior to what most people could hope to accomplish. It seems to me that the contrary would be the result. Cheap phonographs, giving more or less perfect echoes of music, might make superfluous the painful attempts — painful to others as well as to herself — of the unmusical young woman to master impossibilities. To the person of real musical instinct and capacity, the wealth of good music would certainly prove an incentive. When the phonograph goes everywhere, and phonographic music is cheap, the housewife can listen to Rubinstein as she darns the stockings in the evening, and get superb lessons at the great fountains of musical art, if she has any taste that way. There is no reason to suppose that it will be any more difficult to record a performance of *Die Meistersinger* than a recitation by Coquelin, or a Beethoven symphony under Buelow's baton. There is a good time coming for the poor man of good taste.

An interesting question, perhaps to be solved by means of the phonograph, concerns the difference between a good and bad performance, whether of a piano piece or of an opera. It has often been remarked that a particular performance "would not go." In the case of a soloist's work, failure to produce the desired effect might be attributed to the shortcomings of the soloist. But operas and plays sometimes fail signally when, according to all rules, they ought to succeed. Every music-lover will remember certain performances which ought to have been superb, but were nothing of the kind. Opera-goers of the city of New York will be pretty sure to cite the memorable performance of *Faust* which opened the Metropolitan Opera House in the autumn of 1883 — memorable because of its bitter disappointments. A record of this performance contrasted with one of some of the succeeding performances of *Faust* by the same artists might disclose interesting features. It might show that success, or artistic effect, lay in taking one part of the chorus a trifle slower and another part a trifle faster, in emphasizing the bass part here or the soprano part there.

#### A Poor Opera Performance

A few years ago there was a performance of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* that was also curiously ineffective. The opera had already been given a dozen times that season with remarkable success; it was the musical achievement of the season. A repetition was announced for the last night of the year, and the house was well filled. The singers were those who had already made so great a success in Wagner's masterpiece — Fraulein Lehmann and Brandt, Herren Niemann, Fischer, and Robinson. The conductor was Herr Seidl. Yet long before the evening was over people wondered what the matter was. It may be suspected that the audience was tired out with Christmas shopping, and that the singers, finding no response to their efforts, grew discouraged and careless; the anti-Wagnerite may hint that after six performances of *Tristan*, the long-suffering public turned upon its persecutors. But every one cannot have been tired out that New



Year's Eve. Every one's dinner cannot have gone wrong. Whatever the cause, whether the trouble was in the auditors or the performance, Herr Seidl was thoroughly discontented with the results, and one devoted Wagnerite, who had been known to rave over *Tristan* by the hour, said to me as we passed out of the opera house, "I feel as if I do not care to hear *Tristan* again for the next ten years." A fortnight later there was another performance of *Tristan*, which was as conspicuous for success as the one just mentioned had been for failure. A careful comparison of the phonographic records of these two performances might have shown wherein the fault lay; as the sublime is very near the ridiculous, so the impressive performance may be very near the dismal failure—only the phonograph with its minute and faithful record, faithful beyond the power of human perceptions, can tell us how near.

The phonograph as a musical educator offers encouragement to the composer. His work, if it has value, will be known to millions where now it is known to thou-

sands, and it will not take a generation for its worth to be recognized. It was not until twenty years after the production of *Tristan* that we New-Yorkers were enabled to hear its wondrous beauties; and the masterpiece of the high priest of musical art, Wagner's *Nibelung* trilogy, was not heard here until more than ten years after all musical Europe had been ringing with it. In a very few years I fully expect to receive from Europe not only written accounts of the new operas of Berlin, Vienna and Paris, but phonograms enabling me to hear them from end to end. As the wide distribution of literature which followed the cheap books of modern times has helped the author to a living income, so this wide distribution of music through the phonograph will probably do the same thing for the composer of good music. Then the future Wagners may perhaps receive as much for the composition of a music-drama as the author of another *Silver Threads Among the Gold* gets for his gibberish—which has not been the way in our day.

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## COMMENTS - 1944

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When one considers the feeble sounds that emanated from the phonograph of Mr. Hubert's day, particularly in comparison with the realistic reproduction of today, one is surprised at the author's immediate acceptance of the relatively new invention as a invaluable aid to the musician and the composer. Not many people shared Mr. Hubert's enthusiasm at the time. And even though he claims that musicians and musical experts of the day were tremendously impressed with the results of a recording made of Buelow's last concert, I hardly think that many of those people really held to Mr. Hubert's enthusiasms or his vision.

One does not read far in this article before one realizes that Mr. Hubert's enthusiasm carried him farther than more accu-

rate knowledge of the mechanical limitations of the phonograph would have permitted. On the basis of such remarks as "Bear in mind that the phonograms do not deteriorate by constant use," and the assertion that the hundredth performance of the same thing is as good as the first, one suspects that Mr. Edison's press agents or associates sold the gentleman a bill of goods. The wax cylinder used in those days did not survive constant playing any more than the shellac disc of today, even though the sound-box mechanism used to reproduce the music on the cylinder was a very light-weight affair. What he could not have realized or foreseen, was the deterioration of wax over a short period of years. The microscopic holes which appear in the drying-out of the material

are in later years bound to add a disagreeable surface sound as a conjunct to the music. Anyone familiar with the Mapleson cylinders of excerpts from the Metropolitan operatic performances made in the early years of this century knows the noise that exists in these owing to the deterioration of the wax cylinder. Even where these cylinders had not been played, those microscopic flaws contributed an undefeatable problem to the re-recorders of modern times. Where the cylinders had been played even only a few times, there was evidence of wear in the grooves.

#### Buried Treasures

Speaking of old cylinders, Mr. Hubert's mention of those made of the entire concert of Buelow in 1891 should interest the historically-minded phonophile. One wonders just what happened to these "phonograms," which impressed so greatly musicians of repute and musical experts of the day. One wonders if there might not be buried in the secret archives of Edison's laboratories many unusual treasures of this kind. Even if the sounds are feeble and inconclusive, I feel certain they might give us as good an idea, and perhaps a better one, of what Buelow did when conducting the *Eroica* as the studio-made recordings give of what Nikisch did with Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. Buelow used a full orchestra, whereas Nikisch employed a reduced studio orchestra which necessitated a seating arrangement that could not possibly permit him to realize the same effects he would obtain in the concert hall. The Mapleson cylinders, which William Selt-sam of the International Record Collectors' Club has re-recorded on modern discs, show that many effects of a full orchestra could be caught and preserved in the earliest type of recording. To be sure, there is not the same focus on either the orchestra or the singers in the Mapleson recordings as there is in studio-made recordings of the same period where the artist was in close proximity to the horn employed in those times; yet the distance involved (Mapleson recorded most of his cylinders from a bridge above the scenic level of the stage) presented no problems of "blasting" of the cutting needle nor any need for the singers to alter positions

at different levels of the voice, as was necessary when recording was accomplished at closer quarters. The voice of Jean de Reszke, as heard from the cylinder efforts of Mapleson, may be hampered by excessive surface noise, and by the fact that its sound was caught from a distance, but, nevertheless, that voice is recognizable by those who knew it, and his fabulous artistry is caught and conveyed in a way that students and teachers of the art of singing can appreciate. Arthur Waldeck, the well-known vocal teacher of New York, who has contributed articles to our pages in the past, contends that despite the extraneous surface noises, which are—to say the least—suggestive of a special noise device for storm effects in radio or movie use, de Reszke's voice and art is thrillingly revealed for those who listen for such things. A great deal of musical enjoyment has been lost to many listeners to recorded music by virtue of the fact that so many have considered surface noise more important than musical values. One thinks of the recording of Monteverdi's beautiful and moving madrigal - *sestina, Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell' amata* (Columbia set 218), made in Italy around 1928, for whose release in this country the writer was responsible. Many record buyers passed up this fine work because there was too much surface noise; that they were the losers those of us who appreciate the music know full well.

#### Artistic Realism

I cannot avoid mention at this time of the impression of great singers of the past that many of us have gained from Mr. Selt-sam's re-recordings of the Mapleson cylinders. Both Mr. Fassett and I have discussed the recordings of Mme. Eames in these pages. When Mr. Selt-sam issued two short excerpts from the second act of Puccini's *La Tosca*, featuring the voices of Emma Eames, Emilio de Marchi, and Antonio Scotti, which Mapleson recorded at the Metropolitan Opera performance of January 3, 1903, many of us heard for the first time the true magnificence of Mme. Eames' voice. In no other recording has the thrilling dramatic intensity of her upper tones been so realistically conveyed. To be sure, the extraneous surface noise



and the rumble of the motor in Mapleson's machine predominate as far as sound is concerned, yet beyond and above this are those wonderful captured movements of what must have been, in its entirety, a thrilling performance of *Tosca*.

Mr. Hubert foresaw possibilities in the use of the phonograph which the instrument has by no means fully exploited to date. I refer to his contention that the phonograph record should "give for all future time the exact wishes of our composers and performers with regard to tempi, shades of expression, etc." At one point Mr. Hubert conceives that we might "obtain at a trifling cost" phonographic readings, as he puts it, of the most famous artists, and that these would be offered to the public in conjunction with the purchase of printed music. Mr. Hubert could not have foreseen the rich royalties that artists would demand from records, nor the extent to which the artist would be featured above the composer and above all musical values.

#### Vagaries In Pitch

Too, Mr. Hubert did not know his mechanical device. When he speaks of exactitude in reproduction, he did not foresee or know that phonograph motors could be capricious affairs, and that if they ran faster or slower the pitch would vary and the composer's wishes, to say nothing of the artist's observance or neglect of them, would be altered. Some people have an idea that because they own an electrically propelled motor it can never get out of order. Those motors that will stand up over a long period of time are too prohibitive in cost for inclusion in the make-up of the average commercial phonograph. Motors that have a governor can alter in speed. Recently, a reader spoke to me about the recordings of a noted tenor. "Don't you think his voice is rather high and thin?" he said. Investigation proved that his motor, supposed to run at 78 revolutions a minute had advanced to a speed well in the 80s. The governor needed adjustment, and since the motor was set at one speed, he had no idea this sort of thing could happen. While on the subject, I would like to say that every motor should be surfaced twice a year; it requires oiling

and examination of its component parts just as, on one's automobile for example, the points on the spark plugs have to be cleaned and adjusted several times a year to assure full response from the motor.

It is amazing to find a writer in 1893 dreaming of full opera performances being made available "in a few years time" via records. How many, many years passed before this came to pass! Nearly thirty-five years elapsed before any attempt was made to procure a near-complete recording of a Wagnerian music drama at Bayreuth. "There is no reason to suppose that it will be any more difficult to record a performance of *Die Meistersinger* than a recitation . . ." Mr. Hubert could not foresee the problems of recording, and certainly he did not take into consideration the competition in the field which would preclude the realization of many superb public performances, because the artists engaged were not all under the same management.

The Saturday afternoon operas heard in the past few years from the Metropolitan Opera have all undoubtedly been preserved on transcription discs. Whether these are well enough done to permit their re-recording onto commercial discs, I cannot say. However, if some of the really outstanding performances in the past few years are well enough recorded to meet the standards of commercial reproduction, it would be most advantageous, it seems to me, for one or the other of the record companies to bring them out in a commercial set. To be sure, this might necessitate the arrangement with another company for presentation of this or that artist on another label, but this certainly ought to be accomplished without any trouble. Movie concerns loan artists to one another, and stage managements have long done the same thing. A spirit of cooperation is needed in the record field to promote better musical outputs for the record buying public.

#### Home Recording

After the war, it is quite possible that many more people will own recording devices of their own, which will permit them to acquire reproductions of many fine performances that are left to slip away into the ether by radio and record concerns.

It is true that neither the record companies nor the radio concerns are to be blamed for the fact that so much of this happens; it is rather the high price that labor has set on the perpetuation of reproduced performances. When Mr. Hubert wrote his article, there was no Musicians' Union.

The most important thing about Mr. Hubert's article, and the main reason for its republication here, is the fact that his visualization of the phonograph's potentialities was so far-reaching. It is an incontrovertible fact that these potentialities have never been fully realized. Composers, with very few exceptions, have never had a real break where reproduced music is concerned. It is the artist who has always got the best break. Of course the artists of each generation should be permitted to perpetuate their art, but the composers should be given an equal opportunity. But there is more to be said on this score than can be encompassed in the space left to us. Artists are notoriously uncooperative people, but as regards the reproduction of music to be bequeathed to posterity, there is a great need for much more cooperation between the artist and the composer. Until only recently, the composer's name was

one of the hardest things to decipher on a record label; now, most companies place it first, where it belongs, even if it is in letters considerably smaller than those in which the performers' names are printed.

The final paragraphs of Mr. Hubert's article relative to poor performances by some of the most successful artists of the Golden Age of Opera are of prime interest. These should go a long way towards convincing those people who believe that the great artists of yesterday never gave poor performances, that their art was not infallible. Collectors of old records are hardly discriminating; they accept many poorly performed or sung recordings by artists of former times along with the best performed ones. Such and such an artist was so famous, so renowned, so gifted, that he or she never could have passed a recording that was not absolutely perfect! But they did, and that is why there is so much difference of opinion on the relative merits of their various records; and those differences of opinion will always exist as long as there are listeners discerning enough to distinguish good artistry from poor artistry.

—The Editor

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## THE PLIGHT OF PABLO CASALS

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We continually hear conjectures regarding the whereabouts of Pablo Casals, the cellist. There have been consistent rumors that friends in this country have striven to obtain his release from a concentration camp in Southern France. As far as we know, nothing definite has come of this, and whether he is still in the same camp or imprisoned elsewhere by the Nazis, we cannot say. A story recently came to us via the French Underground. Not so long ago, it seems, Casals appealed to his old friend and colleague, Alfred Cortot, who is said to have held a portfolio in the Vichy Government as a Minister of Culture, to help him go through Spain to Portugal, and

thence to this country. It seems that Franco was willing at one time to grant Casals, a visa, but his brother-in-law Suñer was opposed on the grounds that if the peasants of Spain knew that their "little Pau" was travelling through the country it might create considerable disturbance. Cortot, being politically on the other side of the fence from Casals, so we are told, turned down his request.

Cortot, Thibaud and Casals were for a number of years, as most record buyers know, associated in ensemble playing; they formed unquestionably the finest trio of its kind that has been heard in this

(Continued on page 331)



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## LIFE IS ROUGH IN THE E. T. O. ♦

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By Cpl. Jerome Pastene

It all began, I suppose, in those now-distant days of 1942 when, as a civilian, I received a letter from philanthropically-minded Harry Futterman, founder of Armed Forces Master Records, suggesting that I establish a New England Committee of that organization. After accepting, I found myself projected into the problems of the civilian turned GI, of the man who must convert himself into a cog of the military machine, and who yet experiences a hunger for beauty more burning and more passionate than any he has ever before known. The contacts this odd-hours activity brought me, and the visits I received at my home from soldier-friends (in particular several visits from Lieutenant—then Private—Harold Schonberg), all brought clearly before me the problem that I knew I was soon to experience.

My first Army days were so crowded with bustling activity (and tired muscles) that I had no time to concern myself with music. Eight days after donning the uniform for the first time, however, I found

myself on a dirty, stifling day-coach (circa 1890) bound for a southern training camp.

### Basic Training

Along with quite a few other GIs, I met the grey dawn of a North Carolina morning in the center of Camp Sutton, a "tent-city" where, in a temperature that soared regularly beyond the hundred mark, I was to spend the next few months. Now, suddenly, I was stripped of all the comforts, both material and spiritual, that I had previously known. Now, for the first time, I sensed the horribly impersonal machine which is the Army basic training system. Now, without preparation, I felt an emptiness which only those who have endured the same can conceive, and which music alone could salve. Music, alas, was not to be had in any form. The Service Club had a phonograph, true, but no records of any quality, nor was there any chance to hear music of worth.

In a desperate effort to hear music regularly, I appealed to the hostess of the Service Club to let me write, in her name, to AFMR for a library of records. A reply from Mr. Futterman revealed that one had already been sent to Camp Sutton. How

\* A common soldier phrase signifying that life is not quite a bed of roses in the European Theater of Operations.

to find the needle in the haystack? Investigation showed that the library had been "moonlight requisitioned"\* for the personal use of a few officers and had not reached the hands of the enlisted men for whom it was intended. (I hasten to add that this is evidently the exception that proves the value of AFMR, for elsewhere, as I shall relate later, these donations have come into their own).

A second letter to Mr. Futterman produced comically prompt results. Within a matter of days, the hostess received the records from one of the officers, with rather transparent excuses as to why delivery had been delayed. Records were now available to the men, and many a day I entered the Club in search of respite from the gasping heat to find them in good use. The lift they afforded me and, I'm sure, many others, can hardly be surmised.

#### Garrison Soldier

From Camp Sutton, we moved to Camp Butner, by contrast a paradise. Here I found a complete and well-stocked library of records, and a room in which they might be heard, in each of the two service clubs. Unfortunately, the instrument on which they were to be played was most inferior, but a parched man does not quibble because the water is brackish. I did think of arranging for regular concerts there—the selections would have made this possible—but the poor quality of the player, and the absence of almost any type of seats discouraged me. In the Butner libraries I found that the items which interested me most were in excellent condition, while works I cared for least showed signs of the most wear. The Heifetz recording of the Beethoven *Violin Concerto* was in perfect state, but the *William Tell Overture* had a distinctly raffish "T'Hell with William" tone to it.

In nearby Durham and Raleigh we were able to hear some good and some not-so-good concerts. I recall a recital by Artur Schnabel which impressed me at the time as being the finest I'd ever heard him give. My famished ears may have magnified the excellence of his performance, but

it was certainly exceptional. I also recall a pathetic performance at Duke University of *Faust* by a touring company which included Hilda Burke and Armand Tokatyan, under the direction of Giuseppe Bamboschek. As amateur night, it was a great success, but it certainly wasn't the opera I fondly remembered from Paris Opera performances. In the garden scene, a house and garden wall gave way and fell with a resounding crash. The oboist had a pitch all his own, with which the rest of the orchestra evidently could not agree. The singers had trouble in reaching their upper tones. Even so, any live music was so rare that I could find pleasure in that performance, which a third-rate touring opera company in Italy would have disowned.

During that season either Durham or Raleigh also played host to Brailowsky, Jeannette MacDonald, and the New York touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, none of which I was able to hear, owing to training requirements.

Orchestral music—in the flesh—was absolutely unavailable. The Cleveland Orchestra was scheduled to make its annual whistle stop in Durham's cloistered halls early in the Spring, but by then we had gone. Orchestral concerts generally took the form of broadcasts of the N.B.C. Symphony on Sunday afternoons, relayed over the radios of the Sir Walter Hotel, and heard as we reclined across beds enjoying those last precious moments of "civilian" life before the weekend finished with the inevitable return to camp for another training week. For some reason, the Philharmonic concerts were not carried on the hotel radios, nor was it possible, in that part of the South, to pick up the Boston Symphony broadcasts, an especially severe loss to me. In Raleigh I met Allan Broder, who was at Camp Mackall, and told him of the AFMR plan. He wrote Harry Futterman and secured a library, and a letter from him telling of the concerts he put on at "Guadalmackall" was later printed in *The American Music Lover*.

The best GI recorded concert I heard in the States was on a Sunday evening when I visited my cousin Bob, an aviation cadet at Seymour Johnson Field. There, the chapel was open on Sunday evenings for

\* Acquired *sub rosa* and without authority.

any one who cared to read, write and listen. A large amplifier and two speakers created a reasonable approximation of concert tone and quality, and the orderly rows of chapel benches furthered the illusion. The program, I believe, included the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* (Szigeti) and the Prokofiev *Classical Symphony* (Mitropoulos), and the audience—over 200—was remarkably attentive.

"We're going over . . ."

The grinding mill of Army process brought us at last to a Port of Embarkation within reasonable distance of New York. With passes to the city frequently available, hearing music was simple. None the less, I recall with pleasure those every-other days spent in the Music Room of the Service Club where were available a Steinway Piano, a Stromberg-Carlson radio phonograph and the Horowitz Library, which the pianist donated through AFMR.

In New York there were always the Philharmonic, recitals, and musical productions, although the Metropolitan season had ended. I remember *Oklahoma!*—because I never did get a ticket—and *The Merry Widow*, because it was not *echt-Wien* and I knew it. But there was a grand evening at Peter Reed's home, and best of all, what was for me the perfect "au revoir" to America—a Carnegie Hall concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, that orchestra which spells home to me and in which I have so many good friends.

The prospect of further separation—by several thousands of miles—from musical civilization, and the warnings of friends overseas, made me determined to take out musical insurance before it became too late.

After consulting with my Commanding Officer, Colonel George A. Moore, whose appreciation of morale needs and enthusiasm for Special Services work led him to welcome my plan heartily, I visited Harry Futterman and requested a library of records for our unit, explaining our unusual and peculiar needs. Mr. Futterman broke all speed records in producing a library, the gift of the NBC news commentator, Don Goddard.\* I hastily selected

a total of 100 records. There is not one item in the lot which I, as music-critic and music-lover, would exchange. Alas, there was one grievous omission; in my haste, I had included nothing of Brahms, a matter since remedied. Otherwise, it was perfection, ranging from Mozart to Shostakovich. How to get the records back to camp? One hundred weigh a lot, and a crowded bus packed with GIs in a sometime "mellow" state (it was 2 A.M. before I was ready to return—those last nights in your own country are precious!) does not offer ideal transportation for fragile records. I had instructed the shopkeeper to wrap them in four parcels. Going down the line of men waiting for places in the ever-shuttling chain of busses, I detailed (appointed) the most sober four from my own organization. The records reached camp safely, and from there made the journey across the Big Pond without incident, packed in their own permanent case.

" . . . over, Over There"

Our destination turned out to be one of the "somewhere" resorts so popular of late; in this case, "Somewhere in Northern Ireland." To be a little more precise, our new home was a small village, remote and inaccessible in a land where travel has been heavily curtailed. I found there a local chapter of the American Red Cross, and spoke to the hostess, Virginia Sutton, about our recordings, and with eager enthusiasm she arranged a weekly concert, using the new HMV instrument which the club had just received. The concerts attracted at first a small but appreciative audience not only from the men of our outfit, men who are above average in their tastes, as is true of many Headquarters units, but also a goodly sprinkling of men from neighboring camps, eager to hear good music.

Giving some commentary on each composition before playing it, I made it a plan to include a number of good but reasonably light and well-known compositions, sandwiching between them some masterwork which of itself might not attract those not too well versed in symphonic music. We were thus able to at-

\* Mr. Goddard has given four libraries in all.—Ed.



tract a constantly growing audience and make clear to many that great music is not so difficult to enjoy as some would have them believe.

Northern Ireland ceased to be our station in due time. Our next abode was enough to dishearten the most determined musician, for we now found ourselves lost on the moors of England, in country reminiscent of *Jamaica Inn* or *Wuthering Heights*. Sleeping in tents, washing our bodies and our clothing in helmets, eating in the open, on ground that was often wet, unshielded from rain or wind or sun (those few occasions when the sun shone at all!), with everything damp to the touch, music seemed an impossibility, but ever more a necessity. Our only phonograph was a poor second-hand affair, a sound-engineer's nightmare, used for popular recordings. Yet we surmounted the problem. Using the generator and amplifier of our sound-on-film movie projector and a small hand-wound record player, we obtained reasonably good reproduction, and gave our first concert in the hospital tent one grey evening, with the canvas snapping in the never-ending wind, and the audience, some twenty-five hardy souls, wrapped in blankets against the night cold. We shifted the time to Sunday afternoons, and fortunately struck a series of warmer days. With the choice of a better time, the audience grew larger, until groups of fifty to seventy-five became frequent.

About this time, our Special Services equipment came through, and we received an electric portable phonograph with Audak pickup, satisfactory amplifier and 10-inch speaker, and, better still, a large table model Phillips (British) radio of unusual depth and clarity of tone and a spring-wound crystal pickup player which gave results that were more than I had dared to hope for under such field conditions.

With the instruments came unexpected treasure—a large number of HMV pressings, and a varied assortment of the Special Services Division's own new V-Discs. On the HMV label, I found some surprising plums, chosen with a discrimination which one does not always associate with Army tastes! *Peter and the Wolf* (Kousse-

vitzky); Mozart *Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-Flat Major, Flute Concerto in D Major; Nutcracker Suite* (Stokowski), and a number of fine vocal recordings. Of these commercial recordings, nothing need be said. The V-Discs, however, will be of genuine interest to any record-collector.

#### V-Discs

These recordings are the exclusive property of the Special Services Division of the United States Army, and have been released in groups of thirty. I have seen releases C, D and E, finding in them an average of five discs out of every thirty which may be considered classical or semi-classical. This, I think, is a fair balance. Although the Army embraces all types and all tastes, and it includes the man of higher education as well as the illiterate and uncultured, it would still be presumptuous and biased to declare that the devotee of serious music is hereby being slighted; there is no doubt that most young men in our armed forces prefer popular music.

I have already written about a number of the classical items in the V-Discs kits [see Editorial, July 1944 issue—Ed.], so I shall avoid repetition here.

H.M.V. has made a number of recordings for the Special Services Division of HQ, ETOUSA (European Theater of Operations, United States Army) on a private label. These are pressed on the conventional shellac, and consist of piano, or violin and piano selections, with one or two exceptions. Many are inconsequential, both in content and as regards the performers, but Edward Kilenyi is represented on several, and while I still do not care overly much for his Chopin, of which a good bit has been recorded, he does an excellent performance of Debussy's *Feu d'Artifice*. An interesting disc offers Malotte's *The Lord's Prayer* and Handel's *Hear Me, ye Winds and Waves (Scipio)*, sung by Cantril with the RAF Symphony Orchestra.

I forgot to mention one interesting V-Disc—Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, played by Oscar Levant, with Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. Levant's playing is very good, but what makes this record exciting, besides its clear recording, is the



superb playing of Whiteman's band. Would that Gershwin were alive today to re-record this with him, in this fashion.

### Greener Pastures

Time eventually removed us from our forbidding eagle's perch on our lofty hill, and brought us to scenery more in keeping with England's name. It brought us—what is more important—to garrison life, with hot showers, mess-halls, billets, recreation hall, and the sort of life that is possible in such surroundings. A small town not distant, with a fine music shop, was an added attraction to many of us. With our new station came a fortunate change in phonograph equipment; we acquired a powerful push-pull amplifier (using two 6L6 tubes), and capable of considerable volume without distortion, and two outdoor horn speakers with surprisingly good balance of tone. This has resulted in two programs on Sunday, with the equipment mounted in a truck and moved about from camp to camp in the vicinity. Programs are about two hours in duration, and as specimens, I list two below, picked purely at random:

#### I

MOZART — Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-Flat (A. Brain)

Joh. STRAUSS — Kaiserwalzer (Walter-V.P.O.)

Jos. STRAUSS — Sphaerenklaenge — Walzer (Krauss, V.P.O.)

BRAHMS — Variations on a Theme of Haydn (Toscanini)

SIBELIUS — Violin Concerto in D Minor (Heifetz)

#### II

von SUPPE — "Light Cavalry"—Overture (Boult)

PROKOFIEFF — "Peter and the Wolf" (Koussevitzky)

SMETANA — "The Moldau" (Toscanini)

BEETHOVEN — Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat Major (Serkin)

In the adjoining town, I have been able to hear a number of new recordings hither-

to unfamiliar to me, and to expand my library with needed items, two of which are the Brahms *Variations* mentioned above, and the same composer's violin concerto in the Szigeti recording. This brings up the matter of record quality. There is no doubt that, war or no war, the English manufacturers have refused to cheapen the quality of their discs, despite the enormous reduction in output which such a move forced upon them. These discs have surfaces and a finish so superior to ours that several English people to whom I have shown some of our discs, have been able to compare American records only to beaten pewter. In consequence, many recordings that sound scratchy on American pressings prove, on English material, to be much clearer. This is true, for instance, of my English Columbia pressing of the Brahms violin concerto.

Prices, however, soar far above ours, owing to taxes. Although the best English discs cost about as much as our best records, in its base price, the added taxes, which may be single, double, or even triple, change the picture completely. Nine 12-inch records bought recently, which would have cost me \$9.45 in the States, cost in England 3 pounds, 10 shillings and some pence, or better than \$14.00.

Among the English recordings I've heard, nothing has struck me so forcibly as the recording of Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad*, and I understand now why the Editor of *AML* has spoken so feelingly of the music. Indeed, it is a "must" for our catalogues. Another interesting item is a Schumann *Sonata*\* (Busch-Serkin) which I had never previously heard. This short work, the first movement of which I think is the best (it is followed by two shorter movements), has a remarkable freshness. I do not believe it is a familiar work.

Such is the musical course of our military life to date. From past indications and future hopes, I think it safe to say that we shall have music wherever we go . . .

\* The only known Schumann sonata for violin and piano recorded by Busch and Serkin is the one in *A minor*, *Opus* 105, which was long in the H.M.V. Connoisseur's Catalogue; it was issued by Victor (set 551) in June, 1939. This work comprises a first movement taking two record sides, and two shorter movements occupying a single record face each.—Ed.

## SOME ASPECTS

## ITALIAN



## OF

## RECORDINGS

By Leo Goldstein

## V

It was my original intention to end my series of articles on Italian recordings with a survey of the output of La Voce del Padrone, the Italian affiliate of Victor and H.M.V. But since it is likely that the recordings of La Voce del Padrone will be easier to acquire once this war is over, readers may be interested in learning something now about the many unusual items which later should be obtainable on import and possibly through domestic releases, just as some of them were before December 7, 1941.

Like the Italian Columbia catalogue, with which it is now united under one directorship, the Voce del Padrone catalogue is filled with interesting and highly desirable items. Since this enterprising company secured international artists and leading Italian orchestras to record for it, it is only natural that record enthusiasts retain an enduring affection for the concern's label. Many recordings that one would expect to be deleted because of political and racial discrimination, have indeed disappeared from the catalogue, but many others of the same sort are conspicuously present. Recordings by such artists as Menuhin, Busch, Serkin, Levitzki, Horowitz, Catterall, Borowsky, Piatigorsky, Heifetz, Rubinstein and the Budapest Quartet are still listed in the 1942 catalogue. The list of deletions at the end of 1943 contains none of these artists' records, and the shop I visited carried a complete stock of them. The records made by English orchestras were completely excised with one exception—Fritz Busch's

version of *Till Eulenspiegel*. But the orchestra was listed as Grande Orchestra Sinfonica rather than as the BBC. The recordings made by Toscanini, Stokowski, and Koussevitzky suffered the same fate as regards the orchestras' name.

The list of artists recording exclusively for La Voce del Padrone in Italy in 1943 was quite impressive; it included the following: Lina Aimaro, Licia Albanese, Maria Caniglia, Margherita Carosio, Toti dal Monte, Malfalda Favero (sopranos), Beniamino Gigli, Giovanni Malipiero, Tito Schipa, Lauri-Volpi (tenors), Gino Bechi (baritone), and Tancredi Pasero (bass). Symphonic music was in the hands of Franco Ferrara and Adriano Lualdi, the latter a well known composer.

Most of these artists are known to American record buyers, but there is one singer among the lot who has risen recently to a pinnacle of importance in Italy and who can justly be rated with the greatest baritones of our generation. He is Gino Bechi, who is about 31 years old. He has recorded a number of great baritone arias and has participated in two complete opera recordings—*Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Andrea Chenier*—with enormous success. Franco Ferrara, although represented by only a handful of recordings, is a conductor with a future, in my opinion.

The merging of the Italian Columbia and La Voce del Padrone firms has given the latter the opportunity of pressing all of its records on the laminated surface material for which Columbia has been justly noted over here. As a matter of fact, every record label that I have encountered, with the exception of Fonit and

Fonit-Polydor, have been on laminated surfaces.

Since prices now differ from those in the catalogue at hand, and since after the war they will probably vary again, there is no good reason to include them here. When the American Army first entered Italy, some shops were charging but little over former prices, but since then prices have skyrocketed—and it is not unnatural for a dealer to ask as high as 150 lire for a disc that formerly sold for 50 or 60. The difficulty of obtaining fresh stock has something to do with this. The best records, as far as surfaces are concerned, are those of pre-war days. One has to select carefully so as not to buy records with gravelly surfaces, some items having been so greatly in demand that new pressings had to be hurried through production on inferior material.

The following discs were issued during 1941:

PAGANINI (arr. Silva): *Variations on one string on a theme by Rossini* (from *Moses*). Luigi Silva (cello) with piano accom. Disc DA 4450.

ROSSINI: *Quartet in F major*, for flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon. Niedermayer, Wlach, Van Freiberg, Ohlberger, of the Vienna Phil. Orch. Discs DA 4483/84.

SCARLATTI: *Tuo mi chiami* (aria from cantata *Tinte a note di sangue*); and BUZZI-PECCIA: *Colombetta*; Licia Albanese. Disc DA 5372.

PERGOLESI: *Six Sonatas, in G, C, A, B flat, C, and A flat*; Mola Corradina (harpsichord). Set 152.

SAINT-SAENS: *Sanson e Dalila—O aprile fioriero*, and *A notte cadente*; Ebe Stignani (mezzo). Disc DA 5383.

SCHUMANN: *Ich grolle nicht*, and *Widmung*; Alexander Sved (baritone, in German). Disc DA 5388.

BERLIOZ: *Damnatione di Faust—Serenata*, and *Su questa rose*; Alex. Sved. Disc DA 5389.

VERDI: *Macbeth—Pieta, rispetto, amore*; and ROSSINI: *Guglielmo Tell—Resta immobile*; Alex. Sved. Disc DB5366.

SCHUBERT: *Der Wanderer*, and *An die Musik*. Alex. Sved. Disc DB5367.

PUCCINI: *Turandot—Tu che di gel sei*

*cinta*, and *Signore, ascolta*. Licia Albanese. Disc DA 5390.

CILEA: *Adriana Lecouvreur—Io son l'umile ancella*, and PUCCINI: *Madama Butterfly—Un bel di*. Licia Albanese. Disc DB 5383.

VERDI: *Il Trovatore—Di quella pira*; and PUCCINI: *Manon Lescaut—No! pazzo son*. Gigli (in the latter with G. Noto). Disc DA 5398.

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino—Recit. a aria, O tu che in seno*. Gigli. Disc DA 5410.

PUCCINI: *Manon Lescaut—Ah Manon, mi tradisce*. Gigli. Disc DA 5411.

CACCINI: *Amarilli*; and DONAUDY: *O del mio amato ben*. Gigli. Disc DB 3895.

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana—Addio della madre*; and CILEA: *L'Arlesiana—E' la solita storia*. Gigli. Disc DB 3905.

FLOTOW: *Martha—M'appari*; and VERDI: *Il Trovatore—Ai nostri monti*. Gigli (in the latter with Cloe Elmo). Disc DB 5385.

GIORDANO: *Andrea Chenier—Improvviso*; and CILEA: *L'Arlesiana—E la solita storia*. Gigli. Disc DB 5406.

MASCAGNI: *Isabeau—Non colombelle*, and *E pasera la viva creatura?* Gigli. Disc DB 5407.

MASCAGNI: *Isabeau—Non colombelle*; and *Lodoletta—Ab! trovara*. Gigli. Disc DB 5408.

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana* (complete opera). Santuzza—Lina Bruna Rasa; Turridu—B. Gigli; Alfio—Gino Bechi; Lola—Maria Marcucci; Lucia—G. Simionato. Conductor—Pierro Mascagni. Orchestra and chorus of La Scala. Album set 131 (discs DB1360/70).

MOZART: *Don Giovanni—La ci darem*, and *Figaro—Crudel! perchè finora?* Tori dal Monte and Augustino de Beuf (basso). DA 5406.

VERDI: *Don Carlos—Ella giammi m'amo*, and *Dormiro sol*. A. de Beuf. Disc DB 5399.

VERDI: *Traviata—Lungi da lei*, and GIORDANO: *Fedora—Amor ti vieta*. Giovanni Malipiero (tenor). Disc DA 5407.

- DONIZETTI: *La Favorita*—*Spirito gentil*, and MASSENET: *Werther*—*O natura*. G. Malipiero. Disc DB 5405.
- GIORDANO: *Andrea Chenier*—*La mamma morte*, and VERDI: *La Forza del Destino* — *Pace, pace*. Maria Caniglia. Disc DB 5361.
- MASSENET: *Manon*—*Il sogno*, and *Ab, dispar, vision*. G. Malipiero. Disc DB 5362.
- VERDI: *Otello*—*Dio, mi potevi scagliare*, and *Morte di Otello* (disc DB 5415), (a) *Esultate*, (b) *Ora e per sempre addio*, and *Si per ciel* (disc DB 5416), *Gia nella notte densa/Ed io vedea* (disc DB 5417). G. Lauri-Volpi (tenor), Maria Caniglia (soprano), Mario Basiola (baritone), Gino Marinuzzi and La Scala Orchestra.
- VERDI: *Rigoletto*—*Pari siamo*, and *Ernani* — *Ob, dei verd' anni miei*. Gino Bechi (baritone). Disc DB 5368.
- VERDI: *Rigoletto*—*Cortigiani, vil razza*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Eri tu*. G. Bechi. Disc DB 5369.
- CATALANI: *La Wally* — *T'amo ben io*, and VERDI: *Il Trovatore*—*Il balen*. G. Bechi. Disc DB 5405.
- VERDI: *La Traviata*—*E strano. Ah- fors' è lui*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* — *Morro, ma prima in grazia*. Maria Caniglia. Disc DB 5404.
- DONIZETTI: *Don Pasquale* — *Quel gi- ardo*, and MASCAGNI: *Lodoletta*—*Flammen perdonami*. Toti dal Monte. Disc DB 5396.
- VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Ma dall' arrido stelo*, and *Otello* — *Ave Maria*. Maria Caniglia. Disc DB 5398.
- MONTEVERDI: *L'Orfeo*. Set 153. (This is the same set that was issued prior to the war by MIA of Milano. The original booklet written by Magni-Dufflocq is included with the set, which is contained on 12 discs, DB 5370/81).
- MONTEVERDI: *Lettera amorosa* (madrigale in stile recitativo). Ines Alfani Tel- lini (soprano) with piano. Disc AV 45.
- RESPIGHI: *Abbandono* (Stornellatrice), and OLIVIERI: *La mamma povera* (Nina Nanna). (disc AV 46).
- RESPIGHI: *Nebbie*, *Nevicata* and *Pioggia*. (disc AV 47). Alba Anzelotti (soprano), with piano.
- VERDI: *Non t'accostare all' urna* (roman- za), and BRAHMS: *Notte di Mag- gio*. (disc AV 48).
- VERDI: *Ad una stela* (romanza), and BRAHMS: *Serenata in- utile* (Op. 84) (disc AV 49). Alba An- gellotti with piano.
- GIORDANO: *Mese Mariano-Racconto di Carmela*. Augusta Oltrabella (soprano), with Monticone (contralto) and Tegani (soprano). Disc DB 5382.
- WAGNER: *Sogni and Fermati* (in Ital- ian) (disc AV 293); *Träume*, and *Stebe still* (in German) (disc AW 294), *Nella serra* (in Italian) (disc HN 1824); *Im Treibhaus* (in German) (disc HN 1844). Serafina di Leo soprano) with orchestra.
- SCARLATTI: *Gia il sole dal Gange*, and CACCINI: *Amarilli*. Elena Favi (so- prano). Disc HN 1663.
- PIZZETTI: *I Pastori* (Lirica). Margherita Carosio (soprano). Disc DA 5403.
- MOGART (arr. Mola): *Sonata in B flat major*. Carlo Felice Cillario (violin) and Corradina Mola (harpsichord). Discs DB 5364/65.
- MARESCOTTI, Arturo Ercole (1866---): *Fantasque*. Arturo Michelangeli Bene- detti (piano). Disc DB 5354.
- ZANDONAI: *Serenata Medioevale*. E. Martinenghi (cello), Carl Schuricht & La Scala Orch. Disc DB 5401.
- REZNECEK: *Donna Diana* — *Overture*. Schuricht & La Scala Orch. Disc DB 5402.
- ROSSINI: *Il Viaggio a Reims* (L'Albergo del Giglio d'Oro). Franco Ghione & La Scala Orch. Disc DB 5403.
- MULE: *Largo* for strings, harmonium, harps and piano, and TRENTINA- GLIA: *L'Apparizione* (Quadro sinfonico per *La Festa* di Sem Benelli). Dino Oliveri and symphony orch. Disc S 10490.
- JACHINO, Carlo: *Pastorelle di Natale*, and GIORDANO: *Mese Mariano* — *Inter- mezzo*. Dino Olivieri and Milan Sym. Orch. Disc S 10489.
- MONTANI, Pietro (1895—): *Concertino in E major*, piano and string quartet. Enzo Calace (piano) and La Scala Quar- tet. Disc AW 290.

(Continued on page 332)



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## A CALIFORNIA RECORD SOCIETY

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The Audio Philharmonic Society\* was organized in the fall of 1938 by a group of six music lovers. Two were music teachers, one a doctor, two photographers and one a mechanic, all interested in recordings of better music and in the enjoyment of group listening.

To give the organization a lasting quality a definite plan was worked out at this initial meeting. The gatherings, to be held on the last Saturday of each month, were divided into a Business Meeting not to exceed thirty minutes: a musical program from records occupying approximately one and one-half hours; then refreshments followed by an informal period in which usually we play new records acquired by the members.

It was originally intended to limit the membership to twelve. Soon there were a number of applications, the limit was extended to eighteen and later to thirty. Our average attendance is about twenty-four although since the War it has dwindled to less, with three of our numbers in the Armed Services, one a Lady Marine and of course many working odd shifts or long hours. We are a cosmopolitan group having symphony players and professional men as well as housewives and when we were first organized a WPA worker. One

of our men is a former music critic for a San Francisco newspaper. There is no age limit; among us are high school students and grandparents. Our only requisite for membership is the love of fine music.

Dues are set at 25c a month and are collected immediately following the business meeting. The hostess of the evening is reimbursed \$1.50 for refreshments. Our officers are the usual President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, the Librarian, who attends to the Society's collection of records and to the card index which we keep of the members' records, and also a Historian. The Historian has custody of a leather bound book in which all present, both members and guests, sign their names. At the head of the page is noted the home in which the meeting is held, the program and any other pertinent information. This has proved an interesting custom in looking back to see who heard a given program or where it was held, although we follow the usual procedure in having our Secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting. New officers are nominated once a year by the Past Presidents, who thus form a nominating committee.

Our Treasury is augmented from time to time by the raffling of a record. Once a year the amount is divided and half given to the purchasing of records for the Society's own Record Lending Library. (Re-

\*The Audio Philharmonic Society is located in Alameda, California.



cords or albums are rented for 25c for two weeks.) In choosing these records for our library an attempt has been made to buy those that ordinarily would not be chosen by a private collector. We share our records, using each others' collections in putting on programs. A telephone call to the Librarian, who has custody of the index, will tell what recorded music is available and who owns the records. The Librarian also keeps the books which have been donated to us and which are loaned free of charge. There are listed biographies of composers, a record book and the like.

Programs are presented voluntarily by the members. The Executive Committee does see, however, that from four to six are scheduled ahead. The subject matter is the choice of the one giving the program; it varies from opera and symphonies, to folk music, piano music, presentation of schools of composers and instructive programs discussing the various instruments or explaining a technical side of reproduction. Nor all of our members have phonographs although we meet in the homes of those who do, as the program are all built around the listening to recorded music. Quite a few of us have acquired machines since joining the Society and we all have added records to our collections.

One of our most outstanding evenings was a program put on by a doctor member who is also an amateur photographer. He told us the story of *Die Walkure*, playing the records as the story progressed. Then for further illustration colored slides were shown which he had made himself from pictures taken of the opera.

Another instructive program was given us by one of our members who plays violin in the Oakland Symphony Orchestra and who went to the trouble of prevailing on other symphony players to bring their instruments to our meeting. He gave us a short talk on each instrument with his friends demonstrating its technique and tone. A number of the musicians generously played for us.

We celebrate our anniversary with a special dinner meeting, combining the

pleasures of the table with a musical program, which is usually a combination of offerings from talented members or guests and recorded music. This affair is made the occasion of giving the out-going President a gift, as a rule an album of records which is known to be his heart's desire. Some time during the summer months we make at least one excursion into the hills for a picnic. At Christmas time we have formed the custom of giving our meeting a holiday air by holding it in the home of one of our members who charmingly plays up the Christmas motif with a tree and decorations. Instead of a planned program we play requests and the new records we have received as Christmas presents. Such departures from our usual procedure give us just one more opportunity for enjoying the good fellowship which has sprung up between us and which guests seem to notice at once as a distinguishing feature of our group.

Meeting in the homes of members has welded us closely together. One of our several married couples met at one of the meetings and we have celebrated the arrival of a number of babies, prospective members of the nineteen-sixties. Our most worthwhile achievement is probably the stimulating of new musical interests and widening the horizons of the music we enjoy. The program giver himself is spurred to new pleasure in his own choice of music by doing a little research work for his evening, while at the same time he may be opening up new vistas to his listeners. The smallness and informality of our group lend themselves well to the airing of individual enthusiasms. We have found that coffee with cake or doughnuts heightens the intimacy between us with the result quite frequently that the period following refreshments proves as worthwhile as the planned program, with members comparing notes, demonstrating favorites or asking for special numbers from the host's collection. It is this contact with kindred spirits which is the outstanding feature of the Audio Philharmonic Society and which is adding immeasurably to each member's own appreciation of good music.







## FIFTY GREAT VOCAL RECORDS

By Stephen Fasset

### PART VI

#### Baritones (continued)

31. DAVID BISPHAM—*Der Wanderer* (Schubert) Columbia A5503. Recorded in New York about 1911.

David Bispham (1857-1928), for many years the leading American baritone, had to wait longer than most singers to fulfill his ambition, but, once started, he achieved remarkable success, earning for himself a noteworthy position in the musical life of England and America. It was not until 1886 that he managed to reach Italy, that Mecca of the vocal student, where he studied with Vannuccini, the teacher of Tamagno, and the famous Lamperti. For all his Italian training, his admirable legato and his fine mezza voce, however, he remained an essentially Anglo-Saxon baritone and was not at his best in Italian opera. Leaving Italy, Bispham went to England where he sang in London as early as 1890, soon making his operatic debut as Kurwenal in *Tristan*, always one of his finest parts. A short, vital man with considerable dramatic ability, he was an excellent actor. Wagner was his forte and he mastered such varied roles as Wotan and Beckmesser. Bispham joined the Metropolitan Opera in 1896 and remained with the organization until Grau retired from

the managership in 1902. Thereafter the "Quaker Singer," as this Philadelphia-born artist was often called, devoted himself almost exclusively to concert and oratorio singing.

In 1902-03 Bispham made some recordings for The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. (G&T) of London which are now extremely rare. His work is most widely known to collectors through his many well-recorded Columbia discs which began appearing in 1906. His oratorio numbers, despite an occasional deficiency in agility, are in considerable demand. Some of the songs he recorded strike me as hopelessly dull—the curse of the baritone repertoire—but others are decidedly worth having and I am not alone in my admiration for his impressively sung *Der Wanderer*. His *Erkönig* (Col. A5023) is well done, too. Sydney Homer's seldom-heard *Pauper's Drive* (Col. A5166) is a splendid example of Bispham the dramatic artist and he sings the same composer's *Banjo Song* (Col. A5320) with charm and sympathy.

32. EMILIO DE GOGORZA—*Don Giovanni: Serenade* (Mozart); *Damnation of Faust: Mephisto's Serenade* (Berlioz) Victor 88447 or 6070.

Born in Brooklyn in 1874 of travelling Spanish parents, Emilio de Gogorza was

two months old when he saw Spain for the first time. Eleven years later he was sent to England to be educated and thence to Paris for further study. In 1894 he returned to the U.S.A. and in 1897 the young singer embarked upon a recording career that was to continue for more than thirty years. Under such names as Sig. Francisco, Ed. Franklin, M. Fernand and Herbert Goddard, as well as his own, finally, he made cylinders and discs for nearly every record manufacturer of the day, eventually settling down with Victor in the early nineteen hundreds.

De Gogorza's career shifted into high gear when he made the first of several concert tours with Emma Eames during the season of 1905-06. He was by no means overshadowed by the queenly prima donna and thenceforth was recognized as a concert baritone of the first rank. His singing was distinguished by interpretive insight and extraordinary versatility. Of his countless recordings, De Gogorza's own preference is Debussy's *Voici que la printemps*, electrically recorded by Victor in 1928 but not released until some years later, when it appeared under the seal of the International Record Collector's Club. Since this superb disc is now virtually unobtainable (and chronologically outside the confines of this list), I have chosen one of the artist's operatic recordings which includes the most delectable performance of the *Don Giovanni* Serenata it has ever been my pleasure to hear. A dramatically powerful alternate is *Pari siamo* (*Rigoletto*), Victor 88179 or IRCC 113. De Gogorza's output of concert songs was so enormous that it would require an entire series of articles to discuss them.

33. GIUSEPPE DE LUCA — *Benvenuto Cellini: De l'art splendeur immortelle* (Diaz) Victor 6443. Issued in 1923.

Recently when a group of twenty collectors of acoustic vocal discs made lists of their ten favorite baritone performances Battistini proved to be the winner, Amato and De Luca tied for second place and Ruffo, surprisingly enough, came in third. One of the two most popular individual performances was the record recommended here, six out of twenty collectors having

included it among their ten favorites.

De Luca has always been a warmly admired artist, yet he was never a sensational singer like Ruffo, for instance, and I think it reflects equally well upon the quality of his singing and the taste of record collectors that he received such a large proportion of the votes.

De Luca was born in 1876. After studying five years at the Conservatory in Rome, he made his debut in *Faust*, about 1894. He sang eight seasons at La Scala, made a tour of Europe and returned to Italy. His Metropolitan debut did not take place until 1915, yet he remained at the top of his form for more than a decade and even at the end of his stay with us he showed fewer signs of vocal deterioration than many a younger singer. He was a regular member of the Metropolitan company until 1935, returning to make a few successful appearances in 1939.

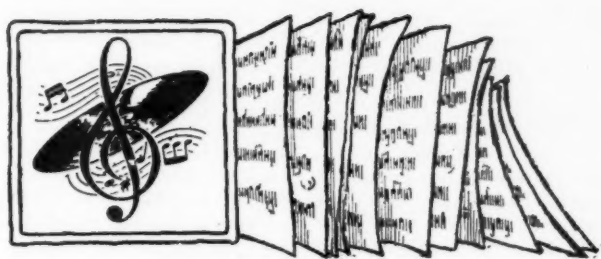
De Luca's voice was a lyric baritone of luscious quality, wide range, even scale and ample volume. His style was warm and his musicianship admirable. In the early nineteen hundreds he recorded for G&T and Fonotipia, but most of us need seek no further than the long list of acoustic and electric discs he made for the Victor company during his career here. He maintained a wonderfully high standard and alternate choices need hardly be specified. The other side of the *Benvenuto Cellini* aria, *Sei vendicata* from *Dinorah*, is magnificent and another very popular De Luca performance *Ab, per sempre* (*I Puritani*), Victor 74787 or 6080.

34. CHARLES GILIBERT — *Plaisir d'Amour*. Victor 85118 or Columbia 30095 or A5070. Recorded about 1907.

"A 300 pound man with a 90 pound voice" was the way a friend of mine used to describe Charles Gilibert, invariably eliciting the retort: "but what a 90 pounds!" Indeed, for all his lack of vocal weight, the fat Frenchman was a great artist and it is difficult to convey an impression of him to a generation that has never heard a style and art like his.

Gilibert was born in Paris in 1866, and received his training at the Conservatoire.

(Continued on page 332)



## RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

*It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the reader is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.*

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### Orchestra

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**BOSTON "POPS" ENCORES:** *Coronation March* (Meyerbeer); *Lobengrin-Prelude Act III* (Wagner) (disc 10-10-91); *Sheep and Goat: Walkin' To the Pasture* (Cowboys' and Old Fiddlers' Breakdown); *At Dawning* (Cadman, arr. Victor Herbert) (disc 10-1092); played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra,

direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor 10-inch set M-968, price \$2.00.

▲ It certainly looks as though Victor were scraping the bottom of the barrel; the selections here do not warrant an album, unless, of course, one concedes that the picture of the orchestra and the blurb on the Boston "Pops" and the picture of the pretty miss with a tray and a bottle of beer is worth 50 cents. Looking at the contents of the album, one is amazed at the *Lobengrin* excerpt showing up for the half-dozen time—not that Fiedler doesn't do a job of it, but for our money no other version of this *Prelude* exists but Toscanini's. Mr. Fiedler provides a good performance of the hackneyed Meyerbeer music, but so did Barlow a couple of years back. The Texan David Guion's *Sheep and Goat*, one of the composer's popular transcriptions of folk tunes, is the most appealing item in the album, and in view of this fact others may wish with us that it had been coupled with anything else but Cadman's saccharine *At Dawning*. The recording rates with the best of the Boston "Pops". —P.G.

GRIEG: *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set X or MX-180, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ The re-issue of this set is for dealer display, and Steinweis, Columbia's ingenious artist, has supplied a decorative and imaginative cover. But no set should be judged by its cover. If you think that Grieg's *Peer Gynt* music has staled with the years, and that no conductor could possibly infuse it with new life, this set may make you change your mind. As Irving Kolodin remarks in his excellent book *A Guide to Recorded Music*: "It is perhaps unfair of Beecham to apply his penetrating eye, his absorbing ear, his inclusive heart, to this work, for he has established in these exceptional records, a standard to which conductors of the future will find it unhappily difficult to conform." If you are fond of this music, you owe yourself the purchase of this album.

—P. H. R.

ENESCO: *Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1* (3 sides); and REZNICEK: *Donna Diana — Overture*; played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, direction of Frederick Stock. Columbia set X or MX 203, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ Despite some superior playing by individual musicians in the Ormandy-Philadelphia performance of the Enesco, my preference remains with the reading by Stock and the Chicago Orchestra. Moreover, Stock performs the work complete; Ormandy does not. But in any case I would buy this recording for the animated and wholly delightful overture to *Donna Anna*, which is given a fine performance here and is splendidly recorded. Anybody who knows and likes the *Bartered Bride Overture* will find this a worthy companion piece. Its composer, although a Viennese by birth, was partly of Bohemian extraction and his comic opera *Donna Anna* reflects his Bohemian ancestry.

—P. H. R.

A WAGNER CONCERT—*Five Famous Orchestral Excerpts: Die Meistersinger — Prelude* (2 sides), *Siegfried — Forest*

*Murmurs* (2 sides), *Lohengrin — Preludes to Acts I and III* (3 sides), *Die Walkuere — Ride of the Valkyries*; played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, direction Fritz Reiner. Columbia set MM-549, price \$4.50.

▲ Reiner's vivid Wagnerian style has long been admired, and some of these recordings—issued originally in 1941 and 1942—have established themselves as worthy contributions to the Wagner literature on records. The reproduction in most of these recordings does not do Reiner full justice; there is an unyielding stiffness to the performances which is due in part, to my way of thinking, to a lack of sufficient room-resonance behind the orchestra. In the *Prelude to Die Meistersinger*, the breadth of Reiner's conception is hampered by the tight, almost studio-like, sound of the recording. The best of the set is the *Forest Murmurs* from *Siegfried*. But recording quality is something that not all listeners are disposed to agree upon, and there are probably many who may prefer this type of reproduction to others of more spacious sound quality.

My preferences in recordings of these excerpts are: *Die Meistersinger — Prelude* (Beecham); *Lohengrin — Prelude* (Toscanini or Furtwaengler); *Lohengrin — Prelude Act III* (Toscanini); *Die Walkuere — Ride* (Henry Wood or von Hoesslin).

—P. H. R.

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### Chamber Music

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DEBUSSY: *Sonata No. 3*, for violin and piano (3 sides), and DEBUSSY (trans. A. Roelens): *Clair de lune*; played by Joseph Szigeti and Andor Földes. Columbia set X or MX-242, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ One rarely hears this sonata played so well as it is here. None of the previous recorded performances quite achieve the admirable blend of poetry and strength which Szigeti brings to his rendition. Moreover, except for the recent performance by Mischa Elman (issued in April 1943), none were so well recorded. Elman's reading had its admirable qualities; there



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was, of course, his richly lustrous and warm-hued tonal quality, but this tended to introduce more sentimental expression than belongs to this essentially Gallic music. Szigeti achieves a wider range of tonal coloring; there is vitality in his playing when that quality is needed for the good of the music and there is a sensitivity of touch that Szigeti alone seems to know how to apply to his music-making. Perhaps my great admiration of Szigeti's finely schooled and mature musicality renders me more receptive to this work; certainly, I must admit to an abiding liking for his artistry.

This music may have a particular interest at the present time for some, since it was a product of another war. It was the last work of the great French modernist, written in 1917. Compared with Debussy's earlier works, this—written at a time when he was ill and unhappily affected by the war—does not represent his genius very favorably; there can be no question that it is labored in part, and its creation was hampered by his illness. The sonata has been termed both archaic and frankly modern. The first movement, marked *Allegro vivo*, might be called bardic in quality—there is an old-world flavor to the prevailingly quiet play of the composer's imagination. The second movement almost evokes visions of a barnyard; it has been called a legend—a story in which woods and nymphs play their part. The last movement suggests to some a festivity. I must confess that this music has never had great interest for me. Whether or not Szigeti's admirable performance will alter my opinion of the work remains to be seen. It has always been my contention that Debussy sought to glorify decidedly second-rate material here.

One's enjoyment of a work like this is largely contingent upon one's admiration of the performing artists. If the listener admires Elman or Thibaud more than Szigeti, then he should by all means adhere to his favorite violinist's rendition.

Mr. Foldes' role in the performance here is that of an equal partner, and he sustains it well.

It remains to speak of Szigeti's choice for an encore. The pastel quality of De-

bussy's *Clair de lune* is nowhere substantiated better than on the piano. Here, the coloring becomes almost too vivid, too vitally alive, less evocative of the moonlit tranquility which Debussy apparently had in mind. Further, Szigeti brings an intensity to his playing which further alters the implication of the music. To be sure, the noted violinist plays with his accustomed artistic finish, but I feel it could have been put to better use in some other piece. However, one must admit there is a certain effectiveness to this violin arrangement, just as there is to the Stokowski orchestral arrangement. But, by and large, I am not in favor of arrangements.

—P. H. R.

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### Keyboard

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BACH: *Toccat and Fugue in E minor*; played by Rudolf Serkin. Columbia disc 71594-D, price \$1.00.

▲ This work dates from Bach's Weimar days, and therefore is an early one. Here, as in other similar works, Bach was, according to Parry, "trying to transfer an organ form to clavier in terms of the Italian style; and from intrinsic qualities it is evident that after his fashion he pursued a course which ministered at once to self-development and artistic achievement." Whether these works are best served by the harpsichord, for which Bach wrote them, or the modern piano remains a moot question. Busoni had a great fondness for the *Toccatas* and he made arrangements of all of them for modern piano; these arrangements, with notes by Busoni's pupil Egon Petri, are of considerable interest not alone for Busoni's work but for Mr. Petri's illuminating comments (Breikopf and Haertel publications).

Serkin plays here with admirable technical fluency, but the unyielding precision of his rhythm circumvents his obtaining the varied colorings and contrasts which Schnabel brought to his performances of the *Toccatas* in *C minor* and *D major*. However, the realistic quality of the reproduction and the clarity of the musical lines provides pleasurable listening.

—P. G.



VILLA-LOBOS: *A Prôle do Bêbê* (*The Child's Family*) (3 sides), and *Alegria na Horta* (No. 3 of *Suite Floral*, Opus 97) (1 side); played by Artur Rubinstein (piano). Victor set M-970, price \$2.50.

▲ Guimaraes Novaes has already given us the first three items from Villa-Lobos' *The Child Family* (Columbia disc 17355-D). The eminent Brazilian composer wrote these pieces in 1917, some eleven years after Debussy completed his *Children's Corner*. The influence of the French school of impressionism is noted in these little *morceaux*, each of which has the name of a different type of doll. The thematic structure of all the eight sections, of which Rubinstein plays seven (the fourth is omitted), is childlike in character, but what the composer does with his thematic material is far more sophisticated than naive. As in the case of the Novaes disc, one feels that the recording remains more estimable for Rubinstein's animated and colorful performances than for any musical values. There is not the same charm in this work that one finds in Debussy's similar opus, *The Allegria na Horta* (*Joy in the Garden*) seems to possess more individuality, although the French influence is still noticeable. This was written in 1916 and undoubtedly owes some of its inspiration to the composer's interest in Brazilian folk music.

Rubinstein has long been a close friend of Villa-Lobos, and one of his most enthusiastic interpreters. He plays all the pieces here with admirable masculine vigor, and with appreciable tonal coloring. Whether his interpretations are to be regarded as more authoritative than Novaes' I cannot say, nor would I have any preferences in the matter, since I do not find the children's pieces of sufficient interest to provoke comparison. The recording here is good.

—P. G.

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## Voice

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Song of India* from *Sadko*; and MASSENET: *Werther* —*Pourquoi me reveiller* (both in French); sung by Richard Crooks (tenor) with Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1093, price 75c.

▲ Crooks is in fine voice in both of these selections and the record will undeniably appeal to his admirers. His singing of the Massenet selection lacks the exquisite finesse that Clément brought to his version of this air, and Crooks tends to chop the final phrase of the verses, but his performance compares favorably with the versions by several Italian tenors on records. This air occurs in the third act of the opera in a love scene between Charlotte and Werther; the latter discovers some translations by her of poems by Ossian and picks one up and sings this aria, in which the poet speaks of his dread of being awakened by spring since the stranger who found him fair now passes him by. Speaking of Massenet's *Werther* reminds us of the fact that Columbia has never issued the splendid recording of the complete opera, made in France, with Ninon Vallin, Georges Thill, and Germaine Féraldy.

Crooks' singing of the hackneyed *Song of India* is almost over-deliberate in its straightforwardness of style. Rimsky-Korsakoff aimed for more nuancing of line than the singer achieves here, but there is something to be said for not sentimentalizing this air.

Pelletier provides the tenor with satisfactory accompaniments, but in neither is the orchestration more than adequate. Recording is good.

—P.G.

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## PABLO CASALS

(Continued from page 312)

century. F. W. Gaisberg, writing in *The Gramophone* for November 1943, has something to say about Cortot and Casals which is of interest since it dovetails with our story. The Beethoven and Schubert trios made by this trio, says Gaisberg, "had a great vogue and paid the artists handsome dividends over many years. In spite of this I could never bring the three together again. The reason Casals gave was that he felt too much chamber work would stamp him as a chamber player and detract from his position as a virtuoso. Today, on reflection, I think the real reason was that they did not see eye to eye on politics." From 1930 to 1936, Casals was Minister of Fine Arts in the Catalan Government; and his work as conductor with the Barcelona Orchestra was his greatest hobby. (Incidentally, it was while conducting this orchestra at Casals' invitation in 1934 that Albert Coates, the English conductor, had a heart attack, which removed him from public activity for a long time.) Gaisberg tells us that during his frequent visits to Spain in these years, he "attended many of these concerts and marvelled at the manifest pleasure of the simple but serious workers." Considering these facts maybe Suñer was not wrong about the possible reaction of the Spanish people.



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## ITALIAN RECORDINGS

(Continued from page 320)

DE GIARDINI: *Siciliana* from *Sonata a tre in E flat*. Calace and La Scala Qt. Disc AW 291.

CICOGLIA, Ascanio (1883—): *Aretusa* poemetta), for wind instruments, violin and piano. Leandro Serafin and Instrumental ensemble. Disc AW 292.

CASELLA: *Tarantella*, and ROSSELLINI: *La Fontana Malata*. Carlo Felice Cillario (violin) and Simoncelli (piano). Disc GW 1703.

CASELLA: *Undici pezzi infantili* (11 Children's pieces). Marcella Barzetti (piano). Disc GW 1966/67.

BARTOK: *Suite, Op. 14*. Marcella Barzetti (piano). Disc S 10491.

S. TOMMASO d'AQUINO: *Pange lingua*; *Tantum ergo* and *O Salutaris Hostia* (rito romano) (disc HN 1592); *Tantum ergo* and *O Salutaris* (rito ambrosiano) (disc HN 1593); *Adoro te devote* (canto gregor.); ANONYMOUS: (a) *O via, vita, veritas*, (b) *O quam amabilis* (disc HN 1606). Coro di un gruppo di fedeli, Basilica di S. Vittore, Milano.

CICONIA: *Cacciando un giorno vidi una cervetta* (Madrilgal of the Hunt), and ANONYMOUS XV CENTURY: *Amor, amaro* (Ballad). Susanna Danco (soprano) with piano. Disc HN 1870.

FERRARI: *L'omino innamorato*, from *La fanciulla prigioniera*, and TOMMASINI: *La lavandaia di S. Giovanni*. Elena Fava (soprano) with piano. Disc HN 1918.

(To be continued)

## 50 GREAT VOCAL RECORDS

(Continued from page 324)

La Monnaie, at Brussels, was the scene of his first noteworthy success. Later he became a favorite at Covent Garden but during his first season at the Metropolitan (1900) he failed to make much impression. The following year, however, he took New York by storm with his characterization of Sergeant Sulpice in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Some years later he became a valued member of Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera. In *Louise*, some critics felt, he overshadowed Mary Garden with his portrayal of the father. Because of the limitations of his voice and his immense girth, he seldom sang leading roles, yet no matter how small the part he always made it a memorable creation. Also a superb concert singer, Gilibert made a specialty of the 18th-century chansons of Grétry, Monsigny and others of that period, which he sang with rare charm. Had he lived in our time some society might have engaged him to record his French song repertoire but, as it is, we have far too few examples of his work in this field—and most of them are scarce, at that. His singing of *Plaisir d'Amour*, technically remarkable for the long-phrased perfection of his legato, the tidy little trill and the melting nuances which his extraordinary breath control made possible, is particularly memorable for its warmth of expression and polished style. On Victor 85120 or IRCC 102 will be found two delightful old French folk-songs sung as only Gilibert could sing them. Unfortunately the record is a rarity. A more common alternate is the aria *Quand la flamme de l'amour* from Bizet's opera *La Jolie Fille de Perth*, Victor 74208 or 6140.

(To be continued)

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